

Connections

Teaching, Learning, and Research

April 2007

From the Director's Desk



Our year of "Connections" in the Coulter Faculty Center is coming to a close. We sincerely appreciate the participation of faculty in our events and services. You will be receiving an electronic survey to complete to help us to know how well we have served you and how we can serve you better. Our reorganization is complete but with the implementation of the QEP, we can expect some additions.

To help faculty, departments, and programs incorporate synthesis into their syllabi and learning activities, the QEP budget calls for the addition of a curriculum design specialist.

To implement and manage the "Education Briefcase," the budget calls for a half time position. You will begin to see more Faculty Center activities and services centered around the QEP theme. We are excited about this prospect of working to integrate student learning experiences.

Remember that we are here all summer and that is a good time to work with an instructional developer to fine-tune a syllabus or develop a new one. In addition, it is a good time to learn new technology related to teaching. We hope to see many of you at our Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning May 14-17. If you are working on a reappointment or TPR document and want another pair of eyes to review it, contact us. If you want to research your own teaching through a SoTL project, call us.

We hope that we have helped you connect to your colleagues and to your students this year. We love our jobs in the CFC because our mission is helping faculty to help our students. Have a rewarding and restful summer.

ANNA T. MCFADDEN
DIRECTOR

Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning

The major, university-wide initiative, The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at Western Carolina University (<http://www.wcu.edu/sotl/>), formally began with the 2003 Summer Institute for Teaching & Learning. The goals of SoTL at WCU are improved student learning, teaching effectiveness, faculty development and a profoundly collegial community of and for teaching and learning.

At the 2007 Summer Institute, May 14-17, in addition to working with facilitator Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar throughout the week on "Designing Courses for Student Engagement," faculty will engage in sustained inquiry about teaching and students' learning. They have the opportunity to choose one topic on which to focus and

become a member of one of the Focus Teams, described below, led by a faculty facilitator. During the 3 ½ days of the Institute, approximately 10 hours will be with one's team, with whole-group activities at the beginning and end of each day, and time for individual work.

The Summer Institute is sponsored by the IT Division, the Division Educational Outreach, Academic Affairs, the Chancellor's Office, and the Coulter Faculty Center.

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Guest Facilitator: Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning 2007

Dr. Alison I. Morrison-Shetlar is Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and Professor of Biology at the University of Central Florida (UCF).

In 1984 Dr. Morrison-Shetlar received her doctorate from Dundee College of Technology and was a Research Scientist at the Kennedy Institute for Rheumatology, London, UK. from 1984 - 1988. In 1988 she was invited to be a senior Scientist at the

Max-Planck Institute in Dortmund, Germany and established and served as Head of the Molecular Biology Department. A move to the United States in 1993 brought her to teach and research at Wesleyan University and Trinity College in Connecticut and in 1995 she joined the Biology Department at Georgia Southern University. While at Georgia Southern University Dr. Morrison-Shetlar was a faculty member and Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching.

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Faculty Learning Communities: Alive and Productive at WCU

The ten Faculty Learning Communities sponsored by the Faculty Center have had a busy and productive year, and the fruits of their labors are benefiting the entire WCU campus. During the 2006-2007 school year, nearly 100 faculty and staff from across the university have participated in Faculty Learning Communities focused on everything from the scholarship of teaching and learning to discussing issues relevant to the distinguished professorate. The following is a list of the FLCs and their accomplishments for the year:

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

This FLC spent the year identifying methods for designing rubrics that inform students of evidence-based standards used in critiquing work to reduce the appearance of subjectivity. These rubrics will, at the same time, provide students with a better understanding of what is expected of them, contributing to their ability to self-evaluate. Members then assessed the use of at least one rubric with their students.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Civic Engagement FLC accomplished several goals this year. These goals centered on the establishment of several vehicles for engagement on campus; including a civic engagement course (Civic Engagement - 82708 - HR 346 - 01) which is being offered this fall, as well as a radio show and speaker series.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS

This group has participated in activities that would help the WCU community better understand who they are, what they do, and what they contribute to the campus. This group was involved in two sessions at the Faculty Education and Enrichment Day: "The Distinguished Professoriate: What Is It and What

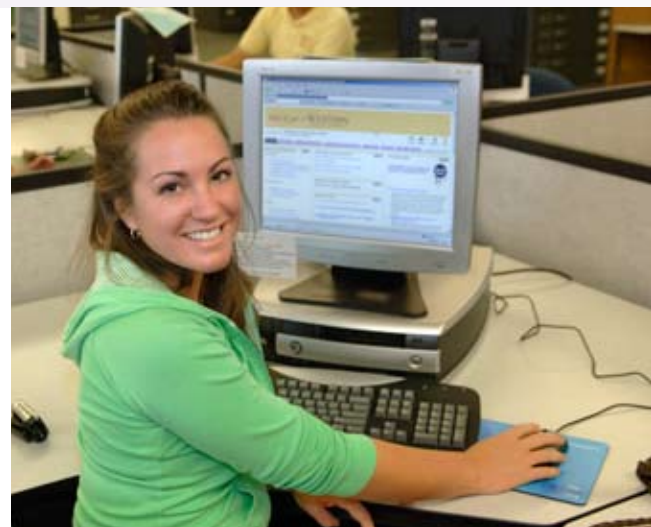
Does It Do for Western?" and "Copyright and Teaching: What to Do? What Not to Do?"

eLEARNING

Faculty in this FLC are working on an online course assessment tool (OCAT), and members of this FLC presented on their eLearning work at WCU's SoTL Faire and UNC's Teaching and Learning with Technology Conference.

IMPROVING STUDENT WRITING

This group's mission for the year was to develop effective writing rubrics for their respective courses and to learn to conduct effective in-class writing workshops with students. They plan to publish the rubrics they develop through the Writing Center website.



LEARNING THROUGH READING

This FLC read articles and discussed ways not only to incorporate more reading into their respective courses, but also to incorporate reading that will help students engage with the course and with the idea of reading in general.

LEARNING RECONSIDERED

The Learning Reconsidered group planned the Faculty Education and Enrichment Day (FEED), held at the UC on February 21. This event was designed to educate faculty on various student services, programs, and other student-related issues that would be helpful for them to know in their roles as teachers and advisers. This FLC hopes that FEED will be an annual event.

PROCESS ORIENTED, GUIDED INQUIRY LEARNING

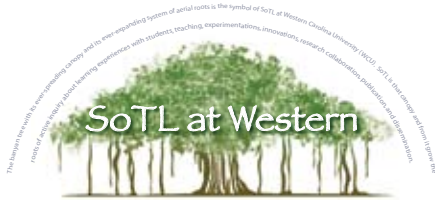
Members of this FLC have observed POGIL courses at Berry College thanks to an NSF grant. The FLC is also coordinating a Chautauqua on POGIL on August 2 - 4 at WCU. The session will be sponsored by the National Science Foundation and will be free of cost. National POGIL experts will lead the three day conference.

GIS Geographic Information Systems Support Available



SERVICE LEARNING

This group is conducting a research project on Service Learning courses at WCU. Their goal is to solicit feedback from faculty on the potential barriers to incorporating Service Learning into their curricula and to use that feedback to assist faculty in developing courses—or revising currently-existing courses—with a Service Learning component.



SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

This group is working on a variety of course-based SoTL projects in the areas of tourism, information literacy, and English. Members also participated in a panel at WCU's SoTL Faire.

Thanks to all who participated in Faculty Learning Communities this year. If you have an idea for a Faculty Learning Community or would like to join an existing one, please contact Amy Martin at x2762 or amartin@wcu.edu.

WCU has a new support team for the ArcGIS software. The team is made up of staff from the Coulter Faculty Center, Hunter Library and the Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource management with varying levels of support to address the needs of the new and experienced users of GIS software.

The support team was put into place spring 2007 and is working on "gearing up" for the fall semester. The team members consist of Sue Grider in the Coulter Faculty Center, Bart Voskuil in Hunter Library and Ron Davis in the Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management.

Sue Grider will work with faculty, staff and students who need the software installed and need a quick start guide to provide some ground work on what the software can do and how to best accomplish a basic analysis using the software. Bart Voskuil will work with clients in obtaining datasets as well as finding the best methods of using the datasets. Ron Davis can consult with faculty, staff and students in how the ArcGIS software might fit into a research project or a course curriculum.

GIS Day was celebrated for the first time at WCU in 2006. Bart Voskuil, Joni Bugden-Storie, and Ron Davis presented to the participants what Geostatistical Information Systems (GIS) is and provided some ideas of how it could be used in their curriculum to enhance the teaching and learning process. Everyone involved was impressed at the number of participants who were interested in learning more about GIS as well as the variety of the participating departments and programs. GIS day 2007 is expected to be an even larger event with more student participation.

Western Carolina University has participated in a UNC System contract with ESRI which allows WCU faculty, staff and students to use GIS software on WCU owned computers. We have over 50 faculty, staff and students using the software full time for teaching and learning as well as economic development. To get more information about who to contact for GIS assistance, please refer to the following URL: <http://www.wcu.edu/facctr/software/esrisoftware.htm>.



SUE GRIDER

Summer Institute: Continued

Goals of the Summer Institute on Teaching and Learning:

- Contribute to expanding the pedagogical imaginations of faculty participants
- Encourage faculty to approach their teaching as an interesting and challenging form of scholarship
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty
- Support faculty innovation and experimentation in their teaching
- Develop an open and collegial academic culture where dialogue and interaction among faculty about teaching practices,

resources, experiences and experiments with student learning are the norm. There also will be lots of good food. We will provide morning and afternoon snacks and lunch each day, with a wine and cheese social scheduled for one evening. There is no cost to faculty for attending the Institute.

TO REGISTER, GO TO:

www.wcu.edu/facctr/SOTL/Events/SITL/07/registration/registration.asp

Online Course Evaluation Pilot

Western recently began a pilot project testing the usage of an online course evaluation instrument to implement the end of semester course/instructor evaluations. The pilot is coordinated by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the Office of the Provost. Participating in the pilot are the following departments: Chemistry and Physics, Psychology, Applied Criminology, Political Science, and Marketing and Business. Chris Snyder in the Coulter Faculty Center provides software support.

CoursEval™ 3 is a web-based software product that allows evaluation of courses and faculty online, thereby replacing the paper based process. The software provides the means to create, deploy, and analyze longitudinal surveys geared to evaluate courses and faculty instruction, as well as other services provided by academic units. Security of data and anonymity of responses are critical elements of this process. Those who participate in any given phase of this evaluation process rely upon these safeguards. CoursEval™ 3 provides for user authentication and a wide array of access levels to survey results, based on the roles participants play in the evaluation activities. Users can place their confidence in the management of data collected by CoursEval™ 3.

Access by participants, to all phases of evaluation process is one of the strongest features of the software. From the point of creating the survey instrument to the viewing of the analytical reports which result from the collection of data, participants can view the various steps of the evaluation process as defined by the roles they play. Immediate access to final results encourages the timely sharing of information that can be quickly put to use to plan, develop, and revise curricula and methods of instruction.

BENEFITS

Savings in Time and Resources

- Time is no longer spent on printing, distributing, collecting, and collating paper surveys.
- Responses to long answer questions, as entered by respondents, appear within an individual course report. No time or effort is needed for physical transcription.
- Immediate access to survey results increases relevancy of assessment.
- No class time must be used. Students can access surveys online, on site or at home.
- New surveys can be created by drawing upon the bank of existing questions/surveys.
- All surveys can be viewed online.

Archiving/Historical Reference

- Results of actual surveys are available for faculty review and program assessment.

FEATURES

Security

- User access is controlled by individual user names and passwords.
- Anonymity of student response is guaranteed.
- Access to survey results for faculty and administrative viewing can be controlled.

Group E-Mail

- Supports direct contact among participants.
- Maximizes student response.
- Reports information on survey availability and access to all results.

For questions about the pilot, contact Chris Snyder at extension 2258.

Guest Facilitator: Continued



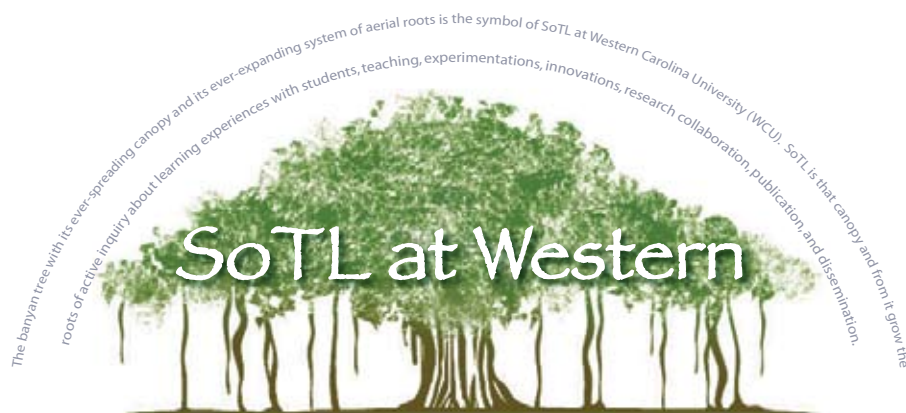
She was also awarded the Board of Regents Distinguished Professor of Teaching and Learning in 1998 and again in 1999. At the university she was awarded the University Excellence in Teaching award, and the College of Science and Technology Excellence in Teaching award in 2001. Dr. Morrison-Shetlar joined UCF in

2002 as Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning where she has built strong programs to support faculty and GTA teaching and learning success. see Faculty Center at UCF.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar is co-author of *Teaching Creatively: Ideas in Action* (Outernet Publishing, 2001) with Dr. Mary Marwitz and has numerous publications on her scientific and educational research. She provides consultancies, workshops and keynote addresses nationally on teaching and

learning with a focus on learning community development. Dr. Morrison-Shetlar has received over \$3 M in grant funding for scientific and educational research and is involved in the assessment of many grants and projects nationally. She is founder and Chair of Florida Faculty Development Consortium (FFDC) and is Co-chair of the Southern Regional Faculty Instruction and Development Consortium (SRFIDC).

Scenes from the Seventh Annual SoTL Faire: “Making Connections”



“The importance of conferences such as this one as a venue for sharing results of research and practice and for learning from one another can not be overstated. Congratulations on the growth of your yearly event, and I’m glad that I can be with you this year to share and to learn.”

—Dr. Barbara Cambridge



Provost Carter took time from his meetings with the visiting SACS team to welcome conference attendees.

The Coulter Faculty Center expresses sincere appreciation to our SoTL benefactors, Chancellor Emerius and Mrs. Myron Coulter, Mrs. Brenda Wellmon, and Mrs. Walton Garrett.



Dr. Barbara Cambridge, president of the International Society of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning gave the keynote: “Near and Far: From Inside Classrooms to Across Continents.”



Jeanne Dulworth described her efforts to help students make connections between their values and contemporary social issues.



John Habel and Cynthia Deale were part of a panel on course based studies about student learning at WCU.



Glenn Bowen, Steve Carlisle, Glenda Hensley, Mickey Randolph, and Bill Richmond led a session on the role of Faculty Fellows integrating service learning into the curriculum.

Considering a Fulbright? Assistance is here

From his address to the General Faculty meeting of 2006, Chancellor Bardo emphasized that “there is an escalating need for linking general knowledge with specific disciplinary or professional expertise within an ethical framework and with experience that allows the individual to ... work creatively to solve new, novel and evolving problems within a culturally diverse, globalized workplace, society and economy.”

Such conditions demand a University faculty with exposure to world cultures and international scholarship. Promoting cross-border academic exchange are the options offered through participation in several Fulbright programs. Fulbright participation supports faculty and student fellowships abroad and on US campuses

To make these Fulbright opportunities more visible at WCU the CFC cooperated with the Graduate School, the Office of International Programs and Services, and the offices of the Chancellor and Provost to host a workshop on Monday, March 26th. Maria Bettua, program officer at the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars in Washington, DC conducted a workshop outlining the range of available Fulbright programs and providing tips for successful proposal development.

This was followed by a dinner at which Chancellor Bardo recounted his experience as a Fulbright Scholar in Australia and affirmed WCU’s strong commitment to supporting faculty participation in Fulbright scholarship. Six faculty members wrapped up the evening with short accounts of their experiences with overseas scholarship.

Overriding themes of the evening stressed the life-transforming nature of such scholarship and the benefits derived by the home and host institutions.

Thirty-four individuals participated in this event including several guests from other institutions. Participant evaluations of Maria Bettua’s workshop were unequivocally positive. We hope that the event sparked interest at WCU in Fulbright opportunities for the short and longer term. For questions and assistance, contact John LeBaron at extension 2454.



Supporting Online Teaching Faculty

As more courses are being delivered online, the Coulter Faculty Center (CFC) has become a resource for instructors who are inexperienced in maximizing the teaching and learning that occurs in their virtual classrooms. An integrated effort between the CFC and Educational Outreach focused on promoting excellence in course design ensures quality in the online courses that are developed and delivered by Western.

One of the most influential resources that has been put forth by the Center is the Online Course Assessment tool (OCAT) authored by the eLearning Faculty Fellows and staff at the CFC. Still in its infancy, the tool is shared with faculty who are involved in

the process of developing their web-based courses. Based on the literature concerning best practices for quality course design, this tool supports faculty to formatively self-assess their developing course.

Another support resource offered through the CFC, and one that many faculty have already taken advantage of, is Certified WebCat training. Delivered entirely online, this training provides instructors who are new to teaching online with an overview of our course management system, WebCat. Offered in monthly cycles, cohorts of faculty wanting to gain experience with using WebCat for instructional delivery

are presented with an overview of the tools contained in the system, such as asynchronous discussion boards, synchronous voice chats, and HTML-authored documents.

Instructional developers are also resources at the CFC and are available for consultation and support for instructors who are moving their courses online. Input and feedback about the entire course development process informs faculty by providing not only sound pedagogical advice, but also a sounding board for constructive critique and positive suggestions for improvement. For questions about this support, contact Robert Crow at extension 2761.

MountainRise

MountainRise is an open, peer-reviewed, international electronic journal published twice a year by the Coulter Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Western Carolina University. Its purpose is to serve as an international vehicle for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). By applying scholarly methods to the study of teaching and learning and making what is learned available to the public and open to critique, contributors to MountainRise stimulate dialogue about the nature, meaning, methods and goals of teaching and learning in higher education.

MountainRise was born in the ancient mountains of western North Carolina. With the 2005 Fall/Winter issue, MountainRise became an international SoTL journal, with members of its Review Board from around the world who are strongly committed to SoTL.

All submissions undergo a blind peer-review process. Contributors worldwide are encouraged to consider submitting to MountainRise as it becomes a significant voice for the scholarship of teaching and learning. For more information or to submit a manuscript, contact.

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The current issue of MountainRise, Volume 3, Number 2 (Fall/Summer 2006), is available at
<http://facctr.wcu.edu/mountainrise/issue.html>

- Using an Institutional Audit to Enhance the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching: A UK case study, D.R.E. Cotton, University of Plymouth, UK
- Approaches to Teaching and Students' Perceptions of Teaching. Michael Jackson
- Teacher Perceptions of Multicultural Education in the United States, Lynn Zimmerman, Purdue University Calumet
- Undergraduate Research Experience in Psychology as a Predictor of Graduation and Retention, David Nalbone, Purdue University Calumet
- Nothing Hard about Soft Skills in the College Classroom, Jacqueline Waggoner, University of Portland, Oregon
- The Development of Social Capital through a Leadership Training Program, Jenepher Terrion, University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

News from the Coulter Faculty Center

Connections

Teaching, Learning, and Research

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Have a wonderful summer.